

REINCARNATION

VOL. II

CHICAGO, SEPTEMBER, 1915

No. 9

THE MEED OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

How curiously the aspirations of nations run counter to the pleas of practicality!

England's duty is to see fair play for all nations on the high seas, to give backing to small, weak nations, to build rail lines from Cairo to the Cape of Good Hope and from Calais to Ceylon.

Her weakness is her strength. Her weakness lies in her respect for individuals and their rights. The Welsh coal-miner may not be too forcefully put into patriotic harness; and the right of governmental power to enforce conscription must be left unexercised until the people realize its necessity.

How different is the facility of the continental powers in their military adaptiveness! They can call instantly upon their populations almost at will. Their laws make this possible.

But where lies the next step in the Law's evolving? Is it not away from the rigidity of that law which gave to kings a divine right, leading through democracy and the day of republics to the hour of perfect citizenship and of that perfect governing which will be that of Perfect Kings?

Will England's weakness cause her to fail in the present hour of struggle? Will she be unable to send that aid to Russia which will forestall the direst ills for that brave ally? Will mediæval greed for territory be glutted with the permanent gripping of brave Belgium?

Who can say? The ways of Providence are not of an hour. The recurrence of nations' lives requires thousands of years of slow mutation; the necessities of Karmic Law are too complex for common comprehension.

But we may be sure that that noble breadth of humanitarianism that gives *each* man his elbow-room of freedom in evolving will find its reward. The divine right of kings is not the right of conquest with armies moved with whips as were the hordes of Xerxes and Darius.

For us—we believe the Allies will not stay their hands until Belgium's release typifies the dawning of the new age of international confraternity and until the fair land of France is freed of the alien boot, to show that the world's new ideal must include the thought that every nation shall be allowed its integrity, its customs and its language.

W. V-H.

REINCARNATION A FACT

I am decidedly of the opinion that reincarnation is a fact in nature. I believe it is a true doctrine and I do not think that any amount of argument against it would shake my belief in it, and this for various reasons.

It seems on the whole to be a logical teaching, when studied in its relation to humanity. I will admit that when first met as a bare statement of fact, it may repel, and that like all important truths it must be studied to be understood. It well repays one for the little time necessarily spent in getting an idea of its broad outlines. The filling in of detail takes more time and is a fascinating study to one taking an interest in the subject.

It seems to be the only teaching that explains the facts of life as we observe them. We see much in the daily life of others and also of ourselves that seems manifestly unjust when judged by ordinary standards, but reincarnation has a clear explanation to offer for this seeming injustice and also offers a way by which one can hasten the normal course of evolution, to the great benefit of one's self, and incidentally of others. If there is any other teaching so fundamentally clear, simple and satisfactory, I must admit that I do not know where it is.

At first thought many people say, "How strange to think that after death we come back to live on earth again. It seems impossible." This is not really the stumbling-block that it appears to be at first sight. We know from observation that Nature tends to repeat herself over and

over again, but always with some advance, however small. Her changes cover vast periods of time.

If one admits the existence of the more permanent part of one's self—usually called the soul—then one must admit its occupancy of a human physical body for the period of the physical life-time. If it has been so attached for one life-time, there is nothing inherently impossible in the idea that it may assume the same condition again. In fact analogy might show that this was not only possible but quite probable.

When the necessity for reincarnation is understood and its place in the economy of nature appreciated, then is its probability much increased for the student, for it has, in the scheme of things, a place that cannot be filled by any other teaching.

Belief in reincarnation is common among the older faiths of the world and it has the indorsement of their scriptures and the weight of their authority.

It may interest you to know what effect a belief in reincarnation has had on my life. In the first place it has given me a more philosophical attitude toward events that are not pleasant. A naturally irritable disposition and quick temper has caused me much trouble in times past and may do so in the future, but still I find that it often occurs to me that this is only one of many lives and that irritating things are mostly not worth the trouble they cause.

This may seem an unimportant thing at first sight, but remember that it is possible that this may be the beginning of an attitude of mind, which, if steadily held, may be of far-reaching

importance in the building of that "house not made with hands." Its effect is all for good. It does not lead to carelessness but to discrimination,—a virtue only too rare.

Beneath and beyond all this is a sub-stratum of belief in reincarnation that is not due to reason or to the experiences of this life. This belief is not strengthened or weakened by argument or controversy. It seems to be a faith I have that cannot be shaken. The question now arises: "When did I develop the knowledge necessary for such a faith?" Certainly not in this life. Then, in some other? If so, then reincarnation is true.

William Brinsmaid.



A fire mist and a planet,
A crystal and a cell,
A jelly fish and a saurian;
Then caves where cave men dwell.
Then a sense of law and order
And a face turned from the clod—
Some call it evolution,
And others call it God.

George Herbert Carruth.

LYNCH LAW AND MOB VIOLENCE

Within a few weeks have occurred two instances in two southern states in which men have deliberately and wilfully undertaken to set aside the normal course of law and justice as they are embodied in the penal code of our country, America. In the state of Texas a negro was burned alive by a large mob in the public square of a city, for committing a crime which has long been regarded with peculiar horror by Southern people generally. In the state of Georgia a Jew, legally convicted of the murder of a white girl, and whose death sentence was commuted by the governor to imprisonment for life, was forcibly taken from his prison cell at night by a few men, carried some hundred miles in an automobile to the neighborhood where the crime was committed, and hanged from a tree. In the Texas case the courts of criminal law in all probability would have convicted the negro and he would have been hanged by law, had the mob not acted as it did. In the Georgia lynching the law had already done its work and the kidnapers wilfully violated its verdict.

Those who are not afraid to look Truth in the face may well ask, "What is the meaning of human law and what is the result of mob law? What right has society to take a human life and what right has a mob of men to thwart or anticipate the course of legal justice by a lynching?"

To arrive at something like a true understanding of these questions, one must not lose himself in concrete incidents and arguments, but deal with general principles, state them clearly and

then apply them logically to such cases as have been mentioned. The certainty of the guilt of the negro and the probability of Frank's innocence are not to be taken into account.

There is a great law of nature which inevitably brings about re-adjustments of conditions which have moved away from their normal state. It deals just as surely, though usually not so swiftly, with cases of moral errors and abnormalities and with cases of untrue thoughts, as it does with physical unbalancings and excesses. To those who inflict suffering upon others, this great Law of natural balance, which we call karma, will bring a return effect of like nature as the action itself. The Law is not arbitrary; It is simply a natural and necessary working out of causes into effects. Those who judge other men, in very truth are judging themselves, and the blow which they strike at another man will some time recoil with equal force upon themselves. Whatever man may do, whether he has courts of law and justice and inflicts legal punishment, makes no difference to the Great Law of Divine Justice, which will take its own time but in the course of thousands of years secure the most exact justice to all men. As the old proverb says: "The mills of the gods grind slowly, but they grind exceeding fine."

Now, it may be asked: "If the Great Law really secures the proper re-adjustments, why should there be any human law at all?" Here the answer is: "Very true: human law is not necessary to secure justice. *But while human law is being exercised, it thereby becomes a part of the outworking of the Law of Karma.* This does

not mean that human law is perfect or just. It simply means that in part it serves to carry out the exact re-adjustments of karma, and in whatever point it fails, there the Great Law will in due time correct the human law exactly and justly. The human law deals only with things of the present time, but karma deals with all time.

“Now then, will not the same principle apply to the case of a lynching, and will not the karmic Law make use of the lynchers and right the wrong, either through their work or in spite of it? And, if we believe this, do we not in effect condone or justify the practice of lynching?” Here, again, we may say: Yes, the Law of karma *does* work through the lyncher, the man who arbitrarily wrests the execution of law from legally constituted authority; it *does* secure justice, either through the lynching or in spite of it. *But this fact in no way justifies or condones lynching.* For, though Karma may bring about justice even through lynch law and mob violence, it remains unalterably true that the practice of lynching is not only fundamentally wrong but it is wholly subversive and destructive of the great system of legal order and human law which marks at the present time the highest stage reached by humanity at large in its imperfect conception of the Great Law. We can only approach perfection by gradual stages. We have our ideal of perfect justice and since it is not a complete ideal, utterly true, we can only realise that ideal imperfectly in our code of human law. But, nevertheless, imperfect as it is, human law is a necessary part of our search for the Truth, and we must value it accordingly and preserve

its dignity and enforce for it the respect which will effectually deter any group of men from wresting it out of its normal course.

What is the karma of the imperfection of our human laws? In other words, who is responsible for the totality of the injustices which are done through our legal system? It is not hard to see that the whole nation is responsible for its codes of law. If it allows much injustice, judging this from a human standpoint, then the nation will and does suffer the consequences, and through its sufferings it will learn the lessons necessary for it to make further progress. Thus the injustice which creeps into the workings of our legal machinery is a necessary evil, and the results of all this injustice will be borne by the nation as a whole. We may dislike our codes of law as much as we please, but we cannot afford to let them be interfered with by the action of any mob of men, no matter whether they are acting irresponsibly, under the impulse of the heat of passion, or with deliberate forethought.

But how about the karma of the lyncher? What will the Great Law bring to him as the necessary result of his action? He has taken life wilfully; some time he must have his own life snatched away from him in return,—perhaps even by the very same method that he himself has used. This debt of life is what Karma makes it obligatory for him to pay. But the lyncher has not only murdered a human being; he has also done a much more dastardly crime: *he has murdered, in his own consciousness, the respect for law, order and authority.* No one can advance in the larger human evolution with wilful disregard

for the Law of Order, denying it in his action. Just what the lyncher must undergo, in this life on earth or in a future one, it is hard to estimate. But that he makes for himself great difficulties which he must some time overcome, is assuredly true. While words fail in the attempt to describe the evil of lynchings, there are other things of similar nature. Most people who hold up their hands in horror at the thought of lynch law, might well investigate their own attitudes and behaviors. How, for instance, about the man who dodges the payment of his just rates of taxation? How about the reckless chauffeur, who speeds up his machine whenever he thinks that he is not likely to be caught, until some day a child is run over and killed? How about the men of the labor unions, who, because their demands for higher wages have not been granted, arrogate to themselves the right of using forcible and unlawful means for keeping the plants and shops of their employers inactive? And, to cap the climax, what about the so-called "guardians of law and order" who use the methods of the "third degree" in order to extort from suspected criminals some damaging information, while the law distinctly and clearly says that no man shall be compelled to testify against himself? These are only a few suggestions; there are many ways of insisting upon one's own "rights" in ways which are very decidedly violations of the respect which is due to any common-sense conception of law and order.

No nation can long maintain itself in strength and usefulness to humanity unless it inculcates in its citizens a just and reasonable respect for its code of laws and for lawfully constituted

authority. Let us teach, therefore, the truth about the Great Law of Karma, widely and freely, as far as the public may be ready to understand it. Let us use our influence to uphold the authority of our government and its courts of justice, and by our own example teach our coming generation respect for the law of the land. And finally, let us stamp out effectually the evils of lynch law and of mob violence, both of which are not only perversions of justice, but a constant menace to the life of the American nation.

In his essay on "Compensation" Emerson says:

The history of persecution is a history of endeavors to cheat nature, to make water run up hill, to twist a rope of sand. It makes no difference whether the actors be many or one, a tyrant or a mob. A mob is a society of bodies voluntarily bereaving themselves of reason and traversing its work. The mob is man voluntarily descending to the nature of the beast. Its fit hour of activity is night. Its actions are insane, like its whole constitution. It persecutes a principle; it would whip a right; it would tar and feather justice, by inflicting fire and outrage upon the houses and persons of those who have these. It resembles the prank of boys, who run with fire-engines to put out the ruddy aurora streaming to the stars. The inviolate spirit turns their spite against the wrongdoers. The martyr cannot be dishonored. Every lash inflicted is a tongue of fame; every prison a more illustrious abode; every burned book or house enlightens the world; every suppressed or expunged word reverberates through the earth from side to side.

A Texas Member.

MISSING THE SOLUTION

A remarkable article headed "The Balance of Births and Deaths" appeared in the August number of the *North American Review*. It is pointed out that there is an almost perfect equilibrium between the birth and death rates throughout the civilized world. Where the birth rate is high, the death rate is also high; when the birth rate of a country rises, its death rate also rises. This is not accounted for by sanitation or any other natural cause, and the *Review* is drawn to the conclusion that it is the result of law. The *Review* says: "Some recondite but infallible law, the nature of which is not yet understood, but the results of which are clearly seen, appears to provide automatically for a certain balance between births and deaths, and between the increase of population, and the duration of life; a law perhaps as certain as that of gravitation, or the conservation of energy," and the *Review* very pertinently asks: "Why not? If the propagation of the race is a part of Nature's scheme, why should it not be controlled *by Nature* and directed by Nature's laws?"

A most interesting fact emerging from vital statistics is that where the birth and death rates are lowest, the average duration of life is longest, and vice versa. Thus Russia has the highest birth rate, and the highest death rate, and the shortest duration of life. On the other hand Australia and New Zealand have almost the lowest birth rate, and decidedly the lowest death rate, and the longest duration of life; yet the natural increase—that is the excess of birth rate

over death rate—is exactly the same in Russia as in Australia. Russia's birth rate is more than 63 per cent. and her death rate more than 162 per cent higher than Australia's, yet the percentage of excess of births over deaths in both countries is precisely the same, namely 16.7 per cent. The same comparison holds good, almost exactly, between Austro-Hungary and Great Britain.

The editor of the *Review* quotes four theories which have been advanced to account for the undoubted fact that the birth and death rates seem to be obedient to some elusive law, but it is evident that such facts as that France has striven to raise her birth rate and failed to do so, while Germany has adopted every means to maintain the existing birth rate and has failed, her birth rate persistently declining, leave the editor non-plussed in his search for a solution.

Reincarnation, and the resultant fact that the return of men and women to take up the task of learning the lessons of earth-life, is not a fortuitous theory, but is regulated by certain great Ministers of the Supreme Power, supply the solution which the editor of the *Review* has missed. He senses accurately that there is a law—there must be a law. If he will study reincarnation literature he will find a reasonable and common-sense statement, both of the law and its working. The birth and death rates—the equilibrium of population—is consciously directed by Great Intelligences, to whom that stupendous duty has been delegated. These Mighty Intelligences act in obedience to the great plan of orderly evolution. That is the solution of the mystery.

John Hawkes.

A STUDY IN KARMA

For the following notes of a talk by Mrs. Besant we are indebted to *Theosophy in India*:

Karma, if you take the trouble to grasp it, is a great lesson in Law. The first thing to realise is that karma "is Law eternal, changeless, invariable, inviolable law which can never be broken, existing in the very nature of things." Now this is the first thing that you have to grasp: it is simply law, and every law of nature which you study will help you to understand how karma works. You must not think of it as arbitrary, you must not think of it as rewarding and punishing, you must not think of it as just and unjust; all these things are out of court; it is the law of nature, and if you will apply these phrases to other laws, you will see exactly what I mean. You do not say of gravitation that it is just or unjust, but merely that "it causes such and such results, let me adapt myself to them." You do not say gravitation rewards or punishes. If you walk over a precipice, you do not say that gravitation punishes, but merely, "I am a fool."

Get then the idea of law. And the first thing to pause upon is "Law eternal." It is constantly asked, "When does karma begin?" It never begins: whenever the conditions exist, there law is manifested—it is eternal. It is part of, it is in, the divine nature; wherever that nature manifests there karma is manifest as the broad principle. All sorts of varieties of it are finite, as varieties begin: there are beginnings and endings, but that is not karma, but a form of karma, and all forms have beginnings and endings and you must

not confuse one with the other. Pralaya, universal dissolution, does not touch the law, it is only a question as to whether the conditions are there, which make us perceive the law. If you look at it metaphysically for a moment, everything always exists in the Divine Life, because that is all. . .

Karma has no beginning; but wherever conditions exist, there it is found to exist. Other words, such as 'changeless, invariable, inviolable,' are simply phrases which are used for all laws of nature, and that brings us to the statement which makes some say, "You must not interfere with another man's karma." Many say it, but they are all uninformed. First of all, ask yourself why should you not interfere with it if you can? What the answer will be is: "Because I am thinking of karma as the will of some great person whom I call God, I must not put myself against God." That is an absurd notion,—trying to interfere with a Will with which you ought to be in accord. You are not thinking of a law of nature but of somebody's command. If you find a certain thing forbidden as a crime, you can properly say, "I must not commit that crime," because you are dealing with an authority which you are bound to respect, but a person's karma has been made by himself. I have made my karma. You have made yours. What is there so sacred in it that I should not interfere with it as much as I choose? Suppose I have written a letter; why should I not write and alter it? Where is the harm? There is nothing sacred in karma.

Never think of interfering with a man's liberty of action or of opinion. That is quite a different

thing. You know how it goes. A man suffers, and you say, "That is his karma." That is quite true, but then you go on to say: "I will not try to relieve his suffering, it is such a horrible thing." I answer calmly: "Quite so, but why should I not interfere?" If he is capable of being relieved, it seems that that fragment of karma has come to an end, otherwise no effort of mine would have any effect.

It is written in the *Gita* that by knowledge you can burn up karma. That is quite true. Then you bring in the idea of ethics, the relation of one individual to another, which is under the general law. Would you say of electricity: "If I understand all the laws of electricity, I can control it as I choose, therefore I can murder a man?" There is certainly a fallacy there. All laws of nature are neither moral nor immoral. They are non-moral. But the use that we make of the powers of nature can be profoundly moral or immoral. Then you have to remember that this knowledge cannot be given until you have reached a stage of development which would prevent you from doing wrong things. Wrong actions are the result of ignorance; the one original sin is ignorance, Avidya. If knowledge comes, all the lower desires which push a man into evil actions are inevitably eradicated. You can balance up any law of nature, if you have sufficient knowledge. You cannot violate any law of nature. That is a fundamental thing you must learn. You may disregard a law, but you cannot break it. You may break human laws, but you cannot break a law of nature. The moment you think of breaking, then you are in a sphere of

inaccurate thinking which will lead you into all kinds of fallacies. You do not break the law of gravitation when you walk upstairs, but you bring your muscles into play to counterbalance the law. The evidence of the law is the effort you must exert. You oppose to gravitation another force in nature, your muscular strength. This is one of the fundamental things that you have to think out hard, until you are sure you have grasped it. . . The question of ethics does not come into this. Of course most of you overbear this wrong idea of karma, and if a man falls, you go and put him on a stretcher and do not trouble about interfering with his karma.

The inviolability of law is the one thing which makes life possible. Think what a universe would be without law!

You cannot think anything or desire anything or do anything which does not go out into the universe around you and affect everything; but your personal relations come in quite a different aspect of the subject, to be thoroughly studied presently. Every law of nature is associated with intelligence, karma not more than any other. Under every law there is intelligence: first divine intelligence, of which it is the expression, and then a number of divine beings who work in and through it. Karma is all-embracing and all other laws are rooted in this invariable action and reaction, cause and effect. Karma is the universal law of action and reaction, and all other laws more or less show that as an underlying principle. It is the first great broad idea that must be grasped before we go into questions of personal karma which are applications of the law, just

as in science a professor first lays down some great principle and makes sure that it is thoroughly grasped. As I have said before there is no end to applications. If you learn physics, you learn stability, equilibrium, stable and unstable, the law of velocities, the law of squares, etc., and you learn the formulæ which are applicable to every individual case, and every case can be worked out with the help of such a formula, but if you do not first grasp what the formula means, then you only work by rote and you may break down over a problem. . . . In karma we have not got the data from which the calculations are to be worked out. You cannot work out the parallelogram of forces if you do not know their intensity and their angles. All problems of such enormous complexity as karma cannot be worked out by us without data. It would not occur to you to say that everything is wrong if you cannot apply your knowledge to a very complicated problem of physics. There are many chemical things that you and I could not do because we do not know how, but we should not say that they cannot be done because of our own ignorance. We should blame ourselves.

Some karmic compounds are very unstable and it is easy to make them explode. We have made karma a sort of arbitrary will which punishes and rewards, because we have been brought up in a system of theology in which there is no relation between actions and their rewards and punishments; like a human law which, in one country, assigns prison for theft, in another cuts off the hand, in another does not take any notice. Theology says, if you lie, you are burned in hell

for ever. There is no relation whatever between the two. What really happens is that your nature becomes more untrue,—you will tell a lie more readily on another occasion. Your being sorry does not stop the results at all. Repentance, which means turning round and an effort to change the whole nature, will bring its results in time. To lie makes one incapable of perceiving the difference between truth and falsehood.

There is no harm in interfering with the law if you can, and if you realise that a man's karma is his own making, you will get rid of the idea that you are opposing God when you are interfering with karma. You may gain very much by trying to understand karma.

EMANCIPATION

Why be afraid of Death as though your life were breath!
Death but anoints your eyes with clay. O glad surprise!

Why should you be forlorn? Death only husks the corn.
Why should you fear to meet the thresher of the wheat?

Is sleep a thing to dread? Yet sleeping, you are dead
Till you awake and rise, here, or beyond the skies.

Why should it be a wrench to leave your wooden bench,
Why not with happy shout run home when school is out?

The dear ones left behind! O foolish one and blind,
A day—and you will meet; a night—and you will greet!

This is the death of Death, to breathe away a breath
And know the end of strife, and taste the deathless life.

And joy without a fear, and smile without a tear,
And work, nor care, nor rest, and find the last the best.

Maltbie D. Babcock.

MENTAL POISE

In these busy days of strenuous activity it is difficult indeed to retain an evenly balanced frame of mind. We are living in a great age, in a most wonderful period of the world's history. "Coming events cast their shadows before them." How true this is, and of what the shadows are portents, are matters of vital interest to every man and woman who use the grey matter of their brains to some definite purpose.

No matter to which quarter of the globe we turn, change and transition meet us on every hand. In Europe, we find practically all the older nations engaged in the most terrible war of which history, past or present, bears record. Men by the thousands and tens of thousands, not old and decrepit, but the very pick and flower of young manhood of all nations are being hurled from time to eternity. Not only between armed nations of the world is war progressing. If we turn our eyes from the Old World to the new, we find it is war all the same, though the ways of warfare may be different. There is war between might and right, between capital and labor, between the unscrupulous financier and the helpless individual.

If we look to Italy we find great earthquakes which destroyed cities and human lives. Japan and China have added their quota to Death's toll by the thousands who have perished by floods, while disaster by shipwreck, tornado, fire and many similar catastrophes have claimed other thousands of lives.

The daily perusal of one's newspaper is alone

sufficient to convince every thinking person that great changes are imminent, that the whole world is in a state of transition. What does it mean? How are we to adjust ourselves to these unusual conditions and retain our mental balance?

Not a few have taken to reading the Bible literally, believing that its prophecies are being fulfilled, that an angry God is pouring out the vials of his wrath. However erroneous this may appear to those who have the truer knowledge of the evolutionary scheme, the very fact that men and women have turned from the gross and material things of the flesh to matters that concern the future of the soul is a hopeful sign. Anything that will make men and women think for themselves and break away from the petty, selfish interests in life, must have a good effect. There is, however, a way of meeting these cross-currents of change and unrest and upheaval with perfect serenity. It is possible by the right knowledge of the fundamental laws of human evolution, that is, karma and reincarnation. To the man who has a thoroughly comprehensive grasp of these beautiful principles of nature there is no cause for undue anxiety or apprehensions as to the meaning of these things.

Stretching back age upon age many thousands of years, are civilizations of the past that have had their birth, growth and decay. Race after race, occupying endless æons of time, has made its evolutionary cycle in this manner; many races yet to be born will run their appointed courses in the same way. Continents have risen and borne the very highest periods of power and of learning, only to be hurled down to total oblivion

by great upheavals, earthquakes, tidal waves or other cataclysms of nature, and only the very faintest memories of their very existence have been retained through the ensuing ages.

In like manner, in our present time, scientists are discovering proof after proof of the gradual growth of another such continent, which is being thrown up from beneath the waters of the great Pacific Ocean. Hundreds of thousands of years ago, in this same vast ocean, was a continent called Lemuria, which in the natural order of things was totally destroyed by volcanic fires.

The one great reason for mental balance amidst these terrific changes is that they are part of natural and spiritual law—the law of evolution. Reincarnation means that, though the forms may perish, either singly or in huge numbers, the Life ever remains indestructible. Life can never be destroyed. What do the forms matter, when once they have accomplished that for which they were intended, whether they be the forms of human beings or of vast continents that nourish and feed the millions of beings who live thereon? Truly the forms perish, but the Life that is the Spirit lives on for ever:

“Never the Spirit was born, the Spirit shall cease to be, never.

Never was time it was not, End and beginnings are dreams.

Birthless and deathless and changeless, remaineth the Spirit for ever.

Death hath not touched it at all, dead though the house of it seems.”

Hence the believer and knower of the Good Law views with equanimity these upheavals and

devastations by war, floods, fires or earthquakes, knowing they are but the death throes of an age that has well-nigh finished its cycle.

The forms are truly being destroyed only that a new era, or a new race may be born. "The old order changeth and giveth place to the new."

He who knows the Law sees not only the immediate effects of these catastrophes, but looks beyond, and yet beyond, and knows that these things had to be, ere new conditions, suitable to a new race, could be introduced. He sees, not human lives being hurled ruthlessly to an eternal state of happiness or torture, but the release of spirits from their prison houses of flesh, to take their period of rest and waiting, till fresh forms, built to meet the needs of fresh conditions, made necessary by a definite stage in life's evolutionary process, are ready.

Changes may come swiftly and with startling developments; catastrophes equal to those that have already taken place in the world's history may yet come upon the races and nations of the earth; continents may be overwhelmed by flood or wiped out by earthquake or fire, —but he who knows the Law will ever remain steadfast, unmoved, calm and content.

The Law *cannot* fail; It *must* work out Its purpose. Whatever may come will be but another step forward and upward in the Great Plan of Evolution, another stage entered upon, when the forces at work, will push the nations onwards until in the ages of the unknown future the great purpose shall have been achieved, and then the necessity for re-birth will cease.

What a wonderful possibility! Yet it may be possessed by anyone who will think and ponder these things in his own mind. By dwelling upon the thought that all that happens to the individual or to the race at large is part of the Divine Plan, that *nothing* happens by chance, that all is ordered by unchangeable Law that can never fail or make mistakes,—by these thoughts one may soon develop a mind that is poised and well balanced amidst all the vicissitudes of life, a mind that sees nothing but Divine Love in all that may occur, because even the God who rules the universe must Himself be limited by the Law that “sweetly ordereth all that is:”

Esther S. Stevens.

WATER LILIES

Lilies pure and sweet,
Gold in your hearts, with petals waxen white,
What mystic word would you repeat?
What thought of God are you?

Do you tell with fragrant breath
Of things long since gone by?
Is't of present life and death?
Or spread you wide to let the future speak?

Or do you say that every thing
That was and is and is to be
Is God Himself; and ye do sing
That He is here? O sacred symbols fair!

Alice Holt Guagliata.

BAD KARMA

Like the countryman who, on seeing a hippopotamus for the first time, said: "There ain't no sech animile," we might preface this paragraph on "bad" karma by saying that there is no such thing. If you will look back, perhaps just a few years, to the heart-aches, the lonely hours made bitter by the pangs of regret, the long-drawn nights of pain which at the time you rightly attributed to the mistakes of previous lives and called bad karma, you will find that through the pain you learned to follow the Good Law, that the mental agony but opened the eyes of the spirit to a nobler, more sympathetic comprehension of the meaning of life.

"It is Time that burneth creatures and it is Time that extinguisheth the fire," and when you apply the proper perspective you must realize that there was no lesson but was necessary for you to learn, no experience, however bitter it may have seemed, but has gone to the formation of the noblest elements of your character. If the lesson was severe, it simply indicates that you were inattentive in a former life and had to be sharply corrected, or it may be that you were to be prepared quickly for the next grade.

In any event you must admit that it was the bumps and not the bouquets that gave you whatever you may have of gentle sympathy, of loving compassion for suffering humanity, and secure in this knowledge you can go singing up the Path, confident in your heart of hearts that whatever karma may bring to you, it can be nothing but good.

J. W. S. Logie.

IN THE GARDEN HOUSE

Evening Nineteenth

Inquirer: Do you know, as I study the law of karma in life as a continuous and universal changing of conditions, bringing men back to birth again and again, I am quite appalled at the imperfection of the world. There is so little in human life which is as favorable for evolution as it could be if only these laws were more generally recognised and regarded as guiding principles. I constantly have to deal with conditions that I know should be different. It is like living in a world of unreality or like living through a sort of nightmare, perhaps not so painful but continuing without rest or relief. I really find it difficult to adjust myself to these conditions; there is such an inconsistency about it all. Life is indeed a riddle hard to understand.

Student: Yes, that is all very true. Probably every one who sincerely studies these great laws of nature will sometimes feel as you do.

Inq.: It seems that people attach too much importance to what they call facts, but they do not consider the full meaning of the things which surround facts. It is all so terribly one-sided and painfully inadequate. People are constantly excited over trifling things while those of tremendous importance escape their notice. And their conclusions are very woefully illogical and inaccurate. It seems that Truth is only a beautiful ideal. Most men do not seem to think that there is any truth beyond the mere visible physical things and happenings. And of course as long as they do not even suspect the existence

of a larger truth, how can they make progress?

Let me illustrate what I said. Within a few weeks there have occurred in the state of Illinois two murders of highly respected and prominent ladies by convicts who had been trusted under the honor system. The daily papers make all they can out of these "sensations," describing them with a wealth of sickening details which may or may not have been true, and they cry out loudly, "Is the honor system a failure?" And then many people, too busy to think for themselves, at once conclude, "Yes, it is a failure; let us abandon it before there is another sad instance of its failure."

Now, it ought to be patent to anybody who can use his reason that such regrettable incidents as have occurred have nothing whatever to do with the question, "Is the honor system a failure?" The real question to be asked is, "Has the honor system been applied with ordinary common-sense and discrimination?" And another one might be asked, "Can anything be done to prevent well-meaning people from trusting convicts unwisely and from placing unsuspected temptations in their way, which may easily culminate in more tragedies?" And for ourselves we might ask this question, "Is it reasonable and proper that there should be made so much outcry over these unfortunate happenings? Will they not tend to bring about a saner treatment of prisoners?"

I wonder if our daily newspapers are at all aware of the responsibility they bear in the matter of exciting the public and misleading them? They make it their constant care to "dress up" a lot of ordinary incidents, catering especially

to the lower elements of human nature, such as a craving for sensation, destructive tendencies and even sensuality.

St.: What you say is quite true, I think. These things belong to the darker side of human life. But then we know what is the duty which we should recognise and accept for ourselves in our relations to these things. We, who recognise some conditions as evil, have a very great responsibility as to how we think about them.

Inq.: Yes, I suppose that we must be held as more responsible in proportion as we are able to understand more of the Truth. We are told to "mind our own business," and no doubt we have enough to do in keeping ourselves in the right attitude and course of conduct.

St.: Not only that, but we are also responsible for the thoughts of criticism which we allow to go out from us and especially the thought that there is much evil in the world.

Inq.: Well, is not that perfectly true?

St.: Unfortunately, yes; in many cases. But we must never forget that our thoughts have a strengthening and even a creative power. If we think strongly that conditions are not right, we help to make the undesirable conditions more fixed and rigid. We should rather feel that things are, for the moment, as they should be. This need not and should not lead us into a helpless inaction before the things that are imperfect. We should do all we can do to make conditions better for to-morrow or the near future. There is possible for us a curious balance between the things that are and the things that ought to be, and if we can live in that balance with eyes

wide open, we may be of very great service to our fellow-beings.

We can not instantaneously change the conditions that are already in actual existence: they have good and sufficient reasons for their existence. But we can apply our thought power usefully towards producing changes for the better in the future. Thoughts which declare that the world is bad are of no value and use, because whatever is, cannot be kept from being; but when we think of how things can be improved, then we are sending out thought energies which will be used up in the work of producing some of the changes which we held in mind as desirable.

This is such a very important matter that we may well consider it carefully and clearly. Suppose you see things which you recognise as very imperfect and evil. If you think chiefly about their evil qualities, you are not in any way helping to make them better. On the contrary you are really accentuating their hindering influence; for as evil is largely, if not wholly, in our consciousness, thinking about evil helps to magnify its effect in our consciousness. We are familiar with numerous instances of the power of thought. A man may think himself sick until his thoughts are actually materialised in visible form. And we know what a powerful influence for happiness may be wielded by a man who never allows himself to dwell in thought on the darker side of life. Of course, true optimism does not deny evil: but it does not strengthen it by thought-power; it reserves its energies for the strengthening of the brighter side of life.

But if, on seeing the evil things, you at once

begin to think of how they may be most easily changed into better ones, and if you picture them in your mind as changing and improving,—then your thought-energies are very likely to expend themselves in that very work of change, when the opportunity offers. They will also help other people to think about how improvement may be made, and when the time is fully ripe and ready, the changes will take place. They will occur under natural, physical laws in orderly fashion, but the motive power in the change will be the thought energies which built the framework in mental matter, of the progressive changes.

C. S.



A NIGHT IN JUNE

Some where before I knew your face,
And somewhere touched your hand,
In another life, in another place,
In another land.

And we may have known as we know to-night
The fragrance of warm June,
And watched together a sea grow white
'Neath the rising moon.

We have forgotten the years of old;
Shall we forget in years to be
This night of ours with its white and gold
And its crooning sea?

Theodosia Garrison, in "The Ladies World."

FIELD NOTES, ETC.

Upon the recommendation of Dr C. W. Sanders, the General Secretary T. S., New Zealand, and Mr J. R. Thomson, Assistant Secretary, Mr. Percy W. Bell has been appointed the Representative for New Zealand of the *Karma and Reincarnation Legion*. His address is c/o 351 Queen Street, Auckland, New Zealand. Mr. Bell is an earnest worker and will be a great help to the work.

* * *

The *Legion* is steadily continuing the production of stereopticon lectures. A number of new lectures are to be ready for the use of our Groups and members in the fall and winter. Several will deal with the subject of physical evolution of organisms, which is so intimately related to the principles of karma and reincarnation, and therefore of very great importance to our students. *The History of Evolution, Mysteries of Cell Life, Heredity and Karma* will be the titles of some of these lectures. Another lecture which will be of great usefulness is *The Ancient Mariner*, with illustrations from Gustave Doré.

It will be well for those of the *Legion* workers who wish to make use of stereopticon lectures for *Legion* work to write early to the Secretary, stating what they expect to do, so that suitable arrangements may be made.

Members are earnestly requested to look about for opportunities to give illustrated lectures to public institutions, such as the various homes, reformatories, and prisons. *This is very important work and should be strongly carried out.*

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Full sets of distribution literature, including twelve *Legion* leaflets and some adhesive seals for envelopes, will be mailed out on receipt of thirty cents in stamps. Have you a friend whom you wish to acquaint with the teachings of karma and reincarnation? If so, one of these sets will be very desirable.

The new Official *Legion* Leaflets contain much information about karma and reincarnation. Thirty copies will be sent for ten cents.

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